

2. (Previously Once Amended) A contrast agent comprising stabilized microbubbles, said stabilized microbubbles comprising a physiologically acceptable gas that is an organic compound containing one or more carbon atoms and fluorine, said stabilized microbubbles being stabilized, at least in part, by a surfactant.
3. The contrast agent of claim 1 wherein said stabilized microbubbles are suspended in a carrier.
4. The contrast agent of claim 1 wherein said stabilized microbubbles are suspended in an aqueous liquid carrier.
5. The contrast agent of claim 1 wherein said stabilized microbubbles are between 0.5 and 10 microns in size.
6. The contrast agent of claim 1 wherein said stabilized microbubbles are sufficiently stable and resistant to pressure changes that they survive in the bloodstream long enough that they may be peripherally intravenously injected, travel through the right heart, through the lungs, and into the left heart without substantially dissolving.
7. (Previously Once Amended) The contrast agent of claim 1 wherein the physiologically acceptable gas is selected from the group consisting of CF_4 , C_4F_8 , C_2F_6 , C_3F_8 and C_2ClF_5 .
9. (Previously Once Amended) The contrast agent of claim 2, wherein the physiologically acceptable gas is selected from the group consisting of CF_4 , C_4F_8 , C_2F_6 , C_3F_8 and C_2ClF_5 .
14. (Previously Once Amended) The contrast agent of claim 1 wherein the physiologically acceptable gas is CF_4 .